

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00356 01 OF 02 211204Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 IO-13 SSM-03 ACDA-12 /097 W  
-----100894 211215Z /11/47

P R 201301Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6515  
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 311  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM  
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG  
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER  
COMSIXTHFLT  
CTF SIX ZERO  
CTF SIX ONE  
CTF SIX TWO  
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO  
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA  
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN  
DIA WASHDC  
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 0356

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE  
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION JANUARY 13 - 19

REF: BEIRUT 0221 (DTG 131215Z JAN 78)

1. SUMMARY: THIS WEEK, FOREIGN MINISTER FUAD BOUTROS  
MET WITH PRESIDENT HAFIZ AL ASSAD IN DAMASCUS. THERE  
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WAS CONTINUED SHELLING IN SOUTH LEBANON, WHERE THE  
MILITARY SITUATION HAS BEEN STEADILY DETERIORATING OVER  
THE PAST THREE WEEKS. THERE WERE INDICATIONS OF RISING  
TENSION BETWEEN DRUZE AND CHRISTIANS IN THE SHUF AND  
METN. THE OFFICES OF TWO BEIRUT NEWSPAPERS WERE BOMBED.  
SOUTH YEMEN WITHDREW ITS CONTINGENT FROM THE ARAB  
DETERRENT FORCE, AND SUDAN MAY FOLLOW SUIT. BACHIR

GEMAYEL LEFT FOR A ONE-WEEK VISIT TO BONN. A LEBANESE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION AND A PHALANGE DELEGATION VISITED DAMASCUS. THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTROVERSIAL NEW RENT BILL WAS EFFECTIVELY SHELVED. END SUMMARY.

2. BOUTROS VISITS DAMASCUS. FOREIGN MINISTER FUAD BOUTROS MET WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM IN DAMASCUS ON JANUARY 16. AFTERWARDS, KHADDAM TOLD REPORTERS THAT SYRIA STRONGLY REJECTED RESETTLEMENT OR INTEGRATION OF PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON OR ANY OTHER ARAB STATE, ACCORDING TO THE BEIRUT PRESS. UPON RETURNING TO BEIRUT, BOUTROS COMMENTED TO REPORTERS THAT A SETTLEMENT FOR SOUTH LEBANON WAS UNLIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE, ALTHOUGH "OUR SYRIAN BROTHERS CONTINUE TO ASSERT THE NECESSARY EFFORTS TO FACILITATE THE REACHING OF A SUITABLE SOLUTION." (WE UNDERSTAND BOUTROS WAS ALSO REASSURED THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT PRESSURE LEBANON TO TAKE SIDES IN THE CURRENT SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN DISPUTE.) PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL, AFTER DISCUSSING THE VISIT WITH BOUTROS, TOLD L'ORIENT LE-JOUR THAT "FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES REMAINS FIRM" AND SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED EVEN FURTHER.

3. DETERIORATING SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON HAS BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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DETERIORATING OVER THE PAST THREE WEEKS INTO DAILY ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY MODERATE ARTILLERY AND SMALL ARMS DUELS. AT THE SAME TIME, BOTH THE CHRISTIANS AND THE PALESTINIANS HAVE BEEN RESUPPLYING AND REINFORCING THEIR POSITIONS (SEE IR 6 857 0010 78). MOST OF THE EXCHANGES OVER THE PAST WEEK OCCURRED BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS IN THE KHIAM/IBIL AS SAQY AREA AND CHRISTIANS IN THE MARJAYUN/AL QULAYAH AREA. THERE HAS BEEN NO MAJOR MOVEMENT OF GROUND FORCES.

4. TENSION IN DRUZE AREAS. THERE ARE INDICATIONS OF RISING TENSION BETWEEN DRUZE AND CHRISTIANS IN THE SHUF AND THE METN. TWO IMPORTANT DRUZE LEADERS, INCLUDING WALID JUMBLATT, HAVE RECENTLY TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING THESE TWO GROUPS IN RECENT MONTHS. ON JANUARY 15, FOR EXAMPLE, A DRUZE HOUSE AND AN AUTOMOBILE IN THE PREDOMINANTLY CHRISTIAN TOWN OF BEIT MERI WERE BOMBED, ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE DATT SOURCE. ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO, DRUZE KILLED TWO MARONITES WHO HAD ENTERED THE DRUZE VILLAGE OF BSHAMUN, ACCORDING TO AN EMBASSY SOURCE.

THE KILLINGS WERE REPORTEDLY IN RETALIATION FOR AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO BOMB A DRUZE SCHOOL IN ABADIYAH, WEST OF ALEY. SOME DRUZE CLAIM THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR RECENT INCIDENTS, IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT DRUZE-CHRISTIAN RAPPROCHEMENT.

5. MORE BOMBINGS IN BEIRUT. THERE WERE MORE BOMBINGS IN BEIRUT. ON JANUARY 13, A BOMB EXPLODED IN THE OFFICE OF THE PFLP WEEKLY AL HADAF, WOUNDING TWO RESIDENTS OF THE BUILDING. ON JANUARY 14, FOUR GUN-MEN FORCED THEIR WAY INTO THE OFFICE OF THE PRO-LIBYAN DAILY AL KIFAH AL ARABI AND THREW AN INCENDIARY BOMB WHICH DESTROYED ITS PRESSES AND KILLED ONE WORKER (BUT THE PAPER HAS SINCE REAPPEARED, USING CONFIDENTIAL

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OTHER PRESSES). A BOMB WAS DEFUSED IN FRONT OF THE LIBYAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE WESTERN DIPLOMAT.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01  
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6516  
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USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM  
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG  
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER  
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6. ADF WITHDRAWALS. SOUTH YEMEN WITHDREW ITS 650 MAN CONTINGENT IN THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE (ADF) FROM LEBANON ON JANUARY 14 - 15. MEANWHILE, PRESIDENT NIMEIRI ANNOUNCED IN KHARTOUM ON JANUARY 16 THAT HE WOULD SOON WITHDRAW THE SUDANESE CONTINGENT IN THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE FROM LEBANON, BUT HE DID NOT SPECIFY WHEN (SEE KHARTOUM 0170). NIMEIRI EXPLAINED THAT THE ARAB LEAGUE HAD FAILED TO PAY THE SALARIES OF THE SUDANESE TROOPS FOR THE LAST THREE MONTHS. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS NOTED ON JANUARY 17, HOW-CONFIDENTIAL

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EVER, THAT KHARTOUM HAD NOT OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED THE GOL THAT THE SUDANESE CONTINGENT WAS LEAVING. IF THE SUDANESE LEAVE, ONLY THE SAUDI AND UAE CONTINGENTS WILL REMAIN IN ADDITION TO THE APPROXIMATELY 30,000 SYRIAN SOLDIERS.

7. BACHIR LEAVES FOR BONN. BACHIR GEMAYEL, HEAD OF THE LEBANESE FRONT'S UNIFIED COMMAND, LEFT BEIRUT FOR BONN ON JANUARY 14. HE WILL REMAIN IN WEST GERMANY FOR A WEEK, WHERE HE PLANS TO MEET WITH FRG OFFICIALS. (SOME LOCAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE HE WILL ALSO MEET WITH ISRAELIS.) ON THE WAY HOME HE HOPES TO SEE FRENCH OFFICIALS IN PARIS. BACHIR RECENTLY SPENT MORE THAN A MONTH IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

8. PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION VISITS DAMASCUS. FOUR LEBANESE DEPUTIES FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION, LED BY ITS CHAIRMAN NAZIM AL-KADRI, VISITORS

CONTINUED TALKS WITH A SYRIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION, LED BY SPEAKER MOHAMMED HALABY, ON THE POSSIBILITY OF UNIFYING LEBANESE AND SYRIAN LEGISLATION. THE TWO SIDES DISCUSSED POSSIBLE UNIFICATION OF CUSTOMS LAWS, THE PENAL CODE, CIVIL LAWS AND THE RENT LAW. THE LEBANESE PARLIAMENT, HOWEVER, HAS NO REAL INTEREST IN UNIFYING THE TWO COUNTRIES' LAWS.

9. PHALANGE DELEGATION IN DAMASCUS. A PHALANGE DELEGATION, LED BY POLITBURO MEMBERS KARIM PAKRADOUNI AND EDMOND RIZK, VISITED DAMASCUS ON JANUARY 18 AND 19, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHERE THEY MET WITH PRESIDENT HAFIZ AL-ASSAD AND AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE CHIEF MOHAMMED KHOLI. PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL ANNOUNCED HE WOULD VISIT DAMASCUS NEXT WEEK.

10. NEW RENT LAW SHELVED. THE CONTROVERSIAL NEW RENT BILL PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT ON DECEMBER 27 HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY SHELVED (SEE DECEMBER 29 SITREP). PARLIAMENT DECIDED ON JANUARY 17 TO REFER THE BILL TO THE ADMINISTRATION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE AND TO WITHHOLD FINAL DECISION ON IT UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT FORMULATES A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING POLICY. MINISTER OF JUSTICE FARID RAPHAEL SAID THE PRESENT LAW WOULD PROBABLY REMAIN IN EFFECT FOR ONE MORE YEAR. (COMMENT: THE GOL HAS ATTEMPTED SEVERAL TIMES SINCE 1966 TO MODIFY RENT LAWS, ALWAYS WITH THE SAME RESULT. EACH TIME THE PROPOSED BILL HAS FOUNDERED ON POLITICAL DIFFERENCES, BEEN TIED TO SOME LARGER UNFINISHED PROJECT - E.G., REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OR COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING POLICY - AND BEEN SET ADRIFT ON THE STATUS QUO TO SINK OR BE REDISCOVERED SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE, INSHALLAH. END COMMENT). PARKER

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## Message Attributes

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